

Government has been culpably negligent in this respect. Nothing worth the name has been attempted or done in this matter for years past. More than 75 per cent of the people are depending on agriculture and agriculture alone. Unless that is put on a sure and sound basis, Government cannot congratulate itself on its achievements in this line. This is a Department, which has to be organised, and worked exclusively. There is no justification for clubbing it with Panchayats. The policy seems to be bad, and the sooner it is rectified, the better.

Panchayats.

In any scheme of rural reconstruction, which any Government undertakes, the Village Panchayat plays a very important part. It is here that self-government begins, and people are taught to manage their own affairs. The Regulation, by which Panchayats are constituted in our State, is framed in a very liberal spirit. These units of self-government are given very important functions. Minor irrigation, communications, medical relief, etc., and in some cases judicial functions, are assigned to the Panchayats. But the present method of the working of the Panchayat Department is far from satisfactory. There is no proper and effective supervision exercised over the working of these bodies. The Superintendent of Agriculture cannot find time to satisfactorily and effectively supervise these bodies. A special officer is absolutely necessary for this purpose. The funds now placed at the disposal of these bodies are insufficient for the carrying out of their duty properly. Even the small amounts sanctioned for each Panchayat are not placed at its disposal in time, so that they may utilise them in the best manner possible. The result is deplorable. Sanctioned amounts are allowed to lapse in many cases, and thus the conveniences of these villages are sacrificed. I know, Sir, of instances, where maintenance of Panchayat roads has not been taken up even by the end of Mithunam, for the simple reason that the sanctioned amounts are not made available to those bodies. Particular attention has to be paid to these bodies, as they, if properly worked, would go a great way in the establishment of popular government in the country.

Excise.

Sir, I come next to the *Excise Policy* of the Government.

The policy that is adopted by the Government in the working of the Department has to be modified to a very great extent. Temperance and prohibition should be the ultimate goal of the Government in their excise policy. I am not unaware of the fact, Sir, that our Darbar cannot work out an independent policy of its own, as our State is surrounded by Travancore and